



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

251 Causeway Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ellen Roy Herzfelder
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000

Fax: (617) 626-1181

or (617) 626-1180

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CONTACT: Corbie Kump
617-626-1119

ROMNEY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$582,000 IN GRANTS FOR CITY OF LAWRENCE

Urban Self-Help and UrbanRiver Visions Grants will Support Riverfront Improvements

State officials joined federal and local partners today to celebrate grants totaling \$582,000 to the City of Lawrence for the implementation of plans to revitalize multiple riverfront areas. The funds are being distributed under the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' UrbanRiver Visions Program, which is a program launched in 2002 that uses urban rivers as a focus for redevelopment efforts, and the Urban Self-Help Program.

"These projects in Lawrence are particularly effective because they use existing natural resources – the Spicket and Merrimack Rivers – as inspirations for greenway planning and community recreation," said Douglas I. Foy, Secretary of the Office for Commonwealth Development. "These are wonderful examples of smart growth because the city has approached its revitalization in a way that allows us to direct growth to where it is most appropriate – areas where infrastructure is already in place."

In 2002, EOEa convened a collaborative planning process called the UrbanRiver Visions Program to develop a vision and action plan for urban riverfronts in seven cities and towns in Massachusetts, each chosen to achieve a mix of size and geographic location. Under the program, each of the municipalities created a unique plan based on their community's needs, including housing, natural resource conservation, recreation, and commercial development. \$257,039 of the funds being awarded today are for the implementation of the plan submitted by Lawrence.

"One of the best ways to improve quality of life in Massachusetts is to help urban communities create and restore places for recreation. I am excited to be a part of helping Lawrence realize its vision of strong, sustainable economic growth and enjoyable riverfront space in the city's urban areas," said Secretary Roy Herzfelder. "These grants are helping this community protect its environmental assets while promoting smart economic and neighborhood development."

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The City of Lawrence will also receive \$325,000 in Urban Self-Help Program funds for the design and construction of Brook Street Park, a new public open space along the Spicket River. The park will include open lawns and walking trails, a gazebo, a picnic area, a basketball court, playgrounds and community gardens. These funds are a portion of the \$4.5 million that EOEa is distributing this year in Urban Self-Help funds to build, restore and rehabilitate parks and land for outdoor recreation purposes.

“Getting these two substantial grants from the state will go a long way towards opening up river accessibility and providing more recreational activities for our citizens. The youth of Lawrence are very excited about having their own skateboard park and we thank the many community groups and strong organizations that have put in a lot of hard work for a better Lawrence. This is a great time for our city!” said Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan.

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